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TAGS: PGOV PREL BK SRS RS

SUBJECT: RUSSIA: OHR DECISIONS AND ALLEGATIONS ABOUT U.S.

DEPUTY HR

REF: SECSTATE 159767

Classified By: Political M/C Alice G. Wells for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

¶1. (C) We delivered reftel demarche on Russian allegations about the U.S. Deputy High Representative to MFA Counselor for Bosnia Ivan Gorbunov on December 10. Gorbunov undertook to pass the points to his superiors, and suffered no further comment on the matter. The Ambassador will reinforce U.S. concerns in his next meeting with DFM Titov.

¶2. (C) Gorbunov told us that the GOR wanted to send a strong message to High Representative (HR) Lajcak and other members of the Steering Board that while the current crisis "seems to have stabilized," the GOR expected Lajcak to consult with elected Bosnian officials and party leaders before announcing rulings, and that all members of the Steering Board, including Russia, should be fully briefed. The GOR believed that the HR's plans must be "coordinated" with the Steering Board so that they do not publicly split the international community. The GOR agrees with the U.S. that unity among international observers is a prerequisite for successful implementation of the Dayton Accords.

¶3. (C) Gorbunov inquired about the U.S.'s timeline for closing the Office of the High Representative (OHR). Regarding benchmarks for the closer of the OHR, he noted that Bosnia joined NATO's Partnership for Peace program in 2006, initialed a Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU on December 4, and would likely sign it in early 2008. Noting that HR Lajcak was already doubled-hatted as the EU Representative and the HR, Gorbunov pointed out that 90% of his duties now applied to EU accession, not Dayton implementation. Since the benchmarks will likely have been met by the expiration of the OHR's mandate, the GOR believed the OHR should be transformed into an EU representative to coordinate international activities in Bosnia and guide the EU accession process.

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